The COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XXXI *January* 19, 1940 NUMBER 13

THE WEEK 273

OUR COUSINS (?) THE BRITISH *H. C. F. Bell* 276

A TRADE UNIONIST *William Collins* 279

ANSWER TO A REPLY *William O'Meara* 281

ARCHERY CLASS (*Verse*) *Glenn Ward Dresbach* 283

VIEWS AND REVIEWS *Michael Williams* 284

COMMUNICATIONS 285

THE STAGE *Grenville Vernon* 287

THE SCREEN *Philip T. Hartung* 287

BOOKS OF THE WEEK 288

The Idea of a Christian Society—The Reconquest of Mexico—Revolution in Land—Law and Politics—America Faces South—Statesmen of the Lost Cause—Revisions of the Treaty of Versailles—Across the Dark River—The Devil to Pay—You'd Better Come Quietly—Captain Abby and Captain John—Rubens

THE INNER FORUM 292

THE COMMONWEAL is indexed in the *Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index* and *Catholic Bookman.*

Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York Annual Subscriptions: U. S. and Canada, $5.00; Foreign, $6.00

Editors: PHILIP BURNHAM, EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.; HARRY LORIN BINSSE, *Managing Editor*; MICHAEL WILLIAMS, *Special Editor*, JAMES F. FALLON, *Advertising Manager.*

Nothing Succeeds Like Success

IT IS a human and evidently natural thing, not unnoted in scripture, that mankind prefers helping those who help themselves, that those who have something more easily arouse the generosity of their fellows than those who have nothing at all, and hence make little stir in the world. This is not to detract from the great efforts afoot to raise money and procure goods for the relief of the Finns. Their pluck, their success (however much exaggerated by the press—the fact remains that there is still a physical, political Finland) all enlist our natural sympathies. But to help them is to do something we want to do; it is charity, but it is not the kind of charity which Christianity characteristically induces—that heroic charity which seeks out those who most need help, regardless of the immediate feelings of the donor. The world, we must force ourselves to remember, is full of people so destitute, so hopeless that to forget them is sinful. China still has millions constantly on the edge of death. France still contains scores of thousands of refugees from Spain, from Russia twenty years back, from Naziland. And—most likely to be forgotten of all—there are the Poles. The Commission for Polish Relief is a functioning agency, not only trying to help refugees in Hungary and the Balkans, but able to administer relief in what was until September Polish territory proper. There is a duty for all of us to make our imaginations more vivid, not to forget those who can so easily be forgotten.

Succoring the Succorless

War and Relief

AS WESTBROOK PEGLER must have suggested somewhere or other, the SEC ought to clamp down on the Budget Bureau and make its published figures reasonably comprehensible and consistent from year to year. It would also be wonderful—indeed—if a vaster bookkeeping job could be done and the public could be given a budget of state and local governments all together with the federal. Perhaps the clearest thing about the new federal budget is that estimates for relief have gone down, and for the army and navy, up. In the presidential message, the National Defense figure is given as $1,800,000,000. This is apparently gotten by adding the regular army and navy estimates of $1,539,445,160 and the Emergency National Defense figures of $300,324,700. But looking at war more realistically, one might be allowed to add estimates for: War and Navy Departments (non-military), Civil Aeronautics Authority and National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, General Public Works for the Veterans Administration, for the Army and Navy Departments, and also the huge figure for Veterans' Pensions and Benefits. All this would add up to $2,769,830,300. Even this does not include such items as the Maritime Commission, the CCC and NYA, nor etceteras. A large lump, $2,769,830,300. The items which can easily be called social and unemployment relief, although their total is well above the general figure of $1,300,000,000 assigned to work relief programs, nowhere near reaches that. The sum for Aids to Youth, Social Security, Work Relief, and Supplemental Relief adds up to $1,992,627,000. "Relief" and "Defense" figures should be clarified. And the public should consider them more critically and seriously than is possible with the present confusion.

The Budget

United States is Cooperating in England's War

SO FAR the new neutrality legislation has prevented the friction with Germany of twenty years ago, but American cooperation with the British blockade is drawing us closer and closer toward an actual alliance. American cargoes for Scandinavia and Italy must be thoroughly certified. American shippers are notifying London well in advance as to cargo goods and their ultimate destination. Where specific

Navicerts or Black Diamonds

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cargo items are not covered by navicerts (British certification that they are not contraband), steamship lines are expected to give black diamond guarantees (cargo not unloaded before British inspection; contraband found turned over to British authorities). The State Department January 9 announced that in the few weeks since December 14 British and French authorities have detained 13 American vessels, of which 6 were still held. The British are also searching letter mail on American vessels bound for neutral ports and maintain the right to do so to continue their contraband control. The fact that Britain, with France, exercises virtual control of the seas does not mean that we have to accede to her demands in order to maintain our commerce with other neutrals. American assistance is a powerful bargaining weapon; the possible loss of our moral and material support would make the British willing to make important concessions. And whatever agreement is reached should be made known in detail to the American people without delay.

The Powder Keg of Europe

THE BACKGROUND of the World War, 1914-1918, was punctuated by a series of Balkan crises until that section earned the name of the Powder Keg of Europe. After so few years, and after so great changes, it is hard to believe that the Balkans can form now in this present emergency a bloc of stability for the protection of Europe. The religious, racial and cultural mix-up in Southeastern Europe, linked with fighting nationalism, gives a better basis for anarchy than order. The industrial backwardness and small population of the Balkan countries will also keep them individually from very positive action in a day that looks like the day of only the very "greatest" powers. But if all the resources of intelligence and free will were used, a union of Balkan states could do the world immense service. Most practically, this could be organized under Italian leadership, but that leadership would have to develop a clarity, consistency and vision almost as great as now attributed to her by her almost professional English and American apologists ("the Mediterranean Basin gang"), which seems more than can be hoped of a modern European nation. Certainly no more discouraging speeches and editorials are published than many recent Italian ones, for instance, the address of Ciano before Christmas to the new Chamber of Fasci and Corporations.

The Balkan Front

But hope can be gathered from the pressure of events. Jugoslavia is not free to say whether or not she will implement cooperation between Italy and Hungary, since Italy too much overshadows her. If Hungary and the others let Rumania be destroyed, even if they had a temporary increase in territory at Rumania's expense, their position would be worse than before. Bulgaria, in spite of her new amiable trade dealings with the USSR, can hardly take any initiative against Balkan unity, in a corner next to Turkey as she is. Then, there is General Weygand with something like twenty divisions in Syria watching the back door of the whole territory, while Germany and Russia are poised to the North. Within the countries solidarity seems to be increasing, a kind of totalitarian solidarity perhaps, under the shadow of national fear, but King Carol seems to be successfully rallying his many minorities, and the Serbs and Croats of Jugoslavia give evidences of almost unprecedented goodwill. It is really up to Italy. Ciano's speech to the Chamber renounced attempts to form a Balkan Bloc. With well balanced threats it hinted that Italy would sometime stop her "non-belligerency" and try to get hers. But Balkan solidarity might well close up the war on one side. It might make the acceptable time for arranging a just peace more obviously the present. It could give Italy a greater and more really glorious rôle than any yet hinted by Fascist leaders.

Requisites of a National Guardsman

AFTER WHAT has just happened in the English War Office, the mere civilian in any corner of the globe who comments on army management or army matters is perhaps temerarious. But we hope we may get by in saying that Major General William N. Haskell (as reported in the public press) seems to us to have sound ideas. As to his actual powers of observation, we reserve judgment until we have an opportunity of ourselves reviewing the National Guard, upon which he has been animadverting. If, as the general implies, they are all "six feet tall, and handsome," the experience should be a pleasure. It is not, we take it, that the general objects to masculine pulchritude as such. He merely feels that recruiting officers have been stressing it a bit too one-sidedly; that "they are too choosy." They are not Hollywood officials, his thought runs, but men responsible for picking good soldiers. What these officers have said in private about the matter is of course not known. Their public comments are in harmony with the general's observations—that is, they admit that the shape of the nose and the color of the hair are not the things by which to judge a candidate, and that they want "men with brains as well as brawn"; although one of them does add wistfully: "But they should also be husky enough to chuck shells around." It is an interesting, if unanswerable, question whether the standards which their general has condemned as too narrow, really are a result of the movies. The supposition is by no means impossible. Meanwhile, to repeat, before wider and juster standards become wholly effective, it would be nice to review the Guard.

Is It the Movies?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Expected Happens

Fifth New Deal Justice

THE APPOINTMENT of Attorney General Frank Murphy to the Supreme Court came as a surprise to no one, and it is sure to be confirmed. The surprise, if any, was that he had not been appointed before this. But evidently the death of the court's Catholic, Mr. Justice Pierce Butler, clinched the matter. Tradition called for a Catholic successor, and the President persuaded Mr. Murphy that he was the man. Two things can be said of the appointment: Mr. Murphy has created about him a very different atmosphere from that which prevailed when he was made Attorney General. Opposition then was explicit and violent. There are still murmurs, but the almost unanimous approval of his present appointment shows how Washington and the country have learned to appreciate his quality. The other reflection relates to the difference between two Catholic jurists: Butler and Murphy. The complete integrity of both has been a distinguished contribution to our public life. Mr. Justice Butler's forte before he went on the bench was a minute and scholarly knowledge of the law as it affected business—property valuation, rate regulation, all the things that are of immediate concern in the day-to-day operation of American business enterprise. Whereas Frank Murphy has for the greater part of his life been an executive official, brought hourly into contact with governmental and human problems which often require something other than a knowledge of the law for their solution. Both talents are essential in the world, both are admirable, but they are likely to lead to points of view that may and often are violently antagonistic. American Catholics may be proud that the Church in this country proves again her age-old power to include within her fold men who, united in faith, yet can honestly represent such sharply divergent social as well as political attitudes.

Sharecropper Evictions in Southeast Missouri

New Victims of Vicious System

THE LURE of war profits has apparently obscured the fact that the United States has a record carry-over of cotton. For certain captains of enterprise have bought up vast sections of rich southeast Missouri land and are moving in with their own men and machinery and plans to raise cotton with hired labor rather than tenant farmers. Present tenants were given notice to leave their homes by January 10 at the latest; 1,000 American families are said to be without a place to go. Something similar last year provoked roadside demonstrations of the dispossessed, a scandal Missouri wishes to avoid this year at any hazard. At one crude encampment of flimsy shacks without floors some hundred families are desperately trying to exist in zero temperatures. Roadside signs that graphically outline the croppers' plight have been posted. Much of the evil is ascribed to the fact that landowners are shifting from tenant to hired labor so that they need not share government benefit payments. What is going to be done to give these hundreds of families immediate relief and start them toward economic independence? Following a conference with the FSA, tenants and landowners, Governor Stark urged the owners to give the tenants a full month's grace and even to retain them for the coming season. In addition 35 families were loaned 60-acre tracts of unused land. Long-range plans are being worked out with the Farm Security Administration. The conference itself was a hopeful sign. But meanwhile are hundreds of destitute cropper families to be cast out upon the road in the very dead of winter?

Repayment of Relief

Democratic Victory

IT IS now some years since a family on the New York relief rolls first made news by returning the money the city had given them. This may not be the first case of the sort in the country—we have seen no statistics on the subject—nor do we wish to claim for this community precedence in a phenomenon which has since become marked here, according to the Department of Public Welfare. If refunds from former relief clients are being made elsewhere, with the same spontaneity and on the same scale, it is even more welcome news. At any rate, New York has reason to be proud of those of her citizens who have come forward the moment that jobs and wages returned to them to discharge what they regard as a debt of honor to the city. Estimates of the total amount refunded here have already placed it in the hundreds of thousands: a sum negligible, perhaps, against the staggering totals expended on relief, but anything but negligible in its other aspects. Counted out by nickels and dimes from the low-bracket salaries from which it is being deducted, it is an enormous sum; and viewed as a token of individual civic stamina and responsibility, its value is beyond computation. When those who decry emergency relief, without having any clear idea in mind as to its alternatives, speak of its dangers—which we ourselves would not be thought to minimize—let it be remembered that some thousands at least of our poor citizens (and perhaps the number will grow) were not pauperized by relief; that although they had no legal obligation to do so, they repaid it at the first moment they became solvent enough to do it. That is a notable victory for democracy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our Cousins (?) the British

A friendly appraisal of English character and history contrasting with last week's "His Majesty's Government."

By H. C. F. Bell

"CUSSING" the British has been an indoor sport of considerable popularity with various peoples for a long, long time; but its present vogue in this country is an arresting development. For Britons have not been universally unpopular by any means. They were, for instance, much esteemed by persons so different as Pope Leo XIII (see the *Amantissima voluntatis*) and Turgeniev; though everyone knows that Bismarck and Metternich both detested them. The varied and sometimes unrecognized motivations of those devotees of the sport who live among us are better left aside; but their methods of deciding that Hitler's pet detestations are also unworthy of our regard may, in view of the times which lie ahead, be worth considering. One thing seems apparent at the outset: that people of integrity and good will often establish British delinquency by one of two methods: by measuring the culprits against some "ideological" standard to which, being as human as the rest of us, they do not conform; or by assembling and exhibiting only the least creditable episodes in English history. These well-meaning critics fail to notice that the former method is as suggestive of the scribes as is the latter of the pharisees. When one uses other civilized nations, instead of systems, as bases of comparison; and when one examines the British record as a whole, one reaches different results.

It is, of course, no accident that the British have been especially unpopular. The capacity of certain groups of them for being offensive (to each other as well as to their neighbors) has been, and is, remarkable: witness the fact that if the Venetian ambassador accredited to Elizabeth should now return to earth he would still find men and women in London who would regard it as a tactful compliment to tell him that they might almost have taken him for an Englishman. But, for all your Briton's national self-esteem, his tradition of free thinking and free speaking have given him the salutary habit of denouncing national faults. Denunciation of official policies and activities is a constant note in parliamentary debates, and in the famous letters to the *Times;* British writers who make their livings by their pens have often found the flagellation of Anglo-Saxon shortcomings a rich vein; idealists have beaten their literary wings against the pedestrian aims and methods of most of their compatriots; while not a few scholars, shocked by the taste for national self-justification so prevalent throughout the English-speaking world, have adopted national self-accusation as an antidote. True, the pens of super patriots have at least redressed the balance; but a piecing together of selections from the writings of the critics would offer a picture of present and past Britain to delight the Wilhelmstrasse.

There is one basic shortcoming in particular which all of us have heard about. It is displayed in "muddling" or blundering in public affairs; in procrastinations and half-measures; in evidences of too much empiricism and too much caution. And it does seem clear that the English, who can be as consistent and persistent as anyone in purely intellectual matters, have conducted their affairs with far more consideration for immediate expediency—sheer opportunism, if you will—than for the most rational theories and systems. And what targets a record of the use of trial and error in public matters over a few centuries can offer to the critical! Now a totalitarian comrade (red or black) or an old-fashioned *philosophe* (if any still survive) could not fairly be expected to feel for a nation such as this the respect which must underlie any genuine friendship. But can American eyes look down American noses because another people displays a preference for the moderate and the practical? Might it not be more consistent to let our respect and liking for the British be determined, not by their *modus operandi,* but by what they have actually produced over a period of time? And, in this day of stark "ideologies," of ruthless extremes, is not the temperate climate of English public life coming to seem more and more healthy? Suppose we were to ask an Englishman of the most representative type (the kind you find at soccer games and pubs) what he was fighting for. By the use of much persistence you would uncover a belief that he was fighting both for his country and for elemental decency in world affairs: and you would find that he had some difficulty in dissociating the two objects of his solicitude. The association may seem vastly amusing just at first; but is it so ludicrous after all? Is not our civilization—Christian civilization—marked in public affairs by an order established through arrange-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment, *i.e.*, by compromise, by voluntary concession, by sacrifice on the part of each individual and each group in deference to the rights and interests of others? Infractions overseas (of which more later) do not vitiate the principle. And does not the British constitution, with its unwritten conventions—do not Anglo-Saxon institutions in general—exemplify this spirit, in spite of, or rather because of, the "trial and error" approach? Bryce and Lowell, no mean judges of the workings of civilized democracy, could highly esteem each others' governments.

Capitalism . . . Empire

But one is tempted to feel that political democracy and civic rights are regarded as Victorian furniture, fit only for the lumber room, by some contemporary "liberals" (definition declined), both secular and Christian. There are members of these two groups who tell us that no one can have much respect or liking for a country so obstinately "capitalist." Now of course every free-born one of us has a right to dislike every capitalistic country in the two hemispheres. But equally of course this means that our dislike must embrace about all the habitable globe excepting New Zealand, the USSR and the Fuehrer's Germany; and must be at least as vigorously applied to these United States as to Britain. I say "at least as vigorously," because some of us may be content to follow Christian teaching in condemning, not capitalism, so much as its abuse; and there seem to be quite competent judges who are far from thinking that the abuse is greater in England than here. It really is difficult to overlook such points as that the British began their new deal a quarter century ago; and that security in the matter of old age pensions and insurance is so taken for granted there nowadays that only such matters as the extension of the holidays-on-full-pay system are of present interest. Five million persons (the equivalent of fifteen millions here) are getting holidays on full pay so far. And we may hope for better things on both sides of the Atlantic if we happen to agree with Mr. D. Graham Hutton that "behind all three 'isms'—Fascism, Communism and Liberalism—an ecumenical economic revolution has been taking place."

Then there is always the familiar picture of the Empire. The British lion, having by dark and brutal deeds taken possession of an utterly disproportionate share of the habitable globe and the natural resources which lie therein, still crouches on his prey, not only holding it by force, but preventing "have not" fauna (the metaphor has become rather intractable) from securing their just share of the earth's riches. That there is verisimilitude in such an account of the origins of the British Commonwealth no person could deny. An honest and informed Englishman might suggest that the account was much too generalized, and that the trials and punishments of Warren Hastings and Dr. Jameson should be remembered along with their misdeeds; but he would readily admit that even in recent times this British soldier or that administrator, removed by distance from the restraints of public opinion and high authority, had done shameful things in India and South Africa and elsewhere. When it came to Ireland (see the *Dictionary of English History*) he would agree to almost anything which one could say—except, perhaps, that any misdeeds of the past should place his country outside the benefit of that obligation to forgive which rests on all of us.

But, whatever the origins of the Commonwealth, the picture of a now crouching and gorged lion will not do. The striking thing about the "Empire" is that few if any of the units of which it is composed would dream of leaving it. Since shortly after the Boer war, Boer leaders have been among its most loyal inhabitants. Eire (apart from the criminal element which has partly transferred its attentions from the British to Mr. de Valera) seems well satisfied to be a neutral, protected from pagan totalitarianism by the British fleet. The "colonies" (ask a Jamaican!) are equally content. So we can pretty well narrow things down to India, where so many want immediate dominion status, and others complete severance from the Empire. And what grounds for debate this question offers: whether it would be even kind to give adult government to a people composed so largely of illiterates and political infants; or how India, torn by so many dissensions (the Hindu-Mohammedan in particular), and with Russia and Japan so interested, would fare in comparison with China. Suffice it here to quote Mr. H. N. Brailsford, whose liberalism and knowledge of the subject are incontestable: ". . . self-government . . . is inevitable. . . . On the other hand the tutelage under which India has been kept has been so tight that to terminate it without some period of transition would be a criminal act." Nor is it clear that any appreciable amount of the resources of the British Commonwealth could be divided with the "have nots," unless the self-governing peoples who reside on top of these resources were to be exiled or transferred to "have not" rule. People in northern Ontario might feel much as would people in northern Michigan if the suggestion were brought up.

Warming-up to England

If the British are not especially dislikable for their way of doing things, their capitalism or their empire, have we, by any chance, reason for "warming up" to them? Would a fair review of England's record provide grounds for any fellow feeling that might make us especially kind? There comes immediately a recollection that, in the last

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

two centuries, the English wholeheartedly and *consistently* offered example, encouragement and sanctuary to the opponents and victims of all kinds of violence and oppression from Lisbon to Leningrad. Whether they agreed with victims who sought refuge was immaterial. Voltaire, Montesquieu and Hugo were fervent in their admiration and their gratitude; Stein and Cavour studied at Westminster what seemed to them the best government of their respective times. London fêted Kossuth and Garibaldi, and gave secure refuge to Herzen and Mazzini and Karl Marx. It had equally given refuge to thousands of French Catholics, clerical and lay, when revolutionary France made its assaults on God. There are British religious communities today which trace back to those times, as well as to the dissolutions in the early years of this century. And of course no one forgets that, throughout the nineteenth century, the British government threw its weight habitually, though not invariably (since all statesmen are fallible, and must consider national interests) on the side of freedom, when freedom's cause was at issue in European affairs. This was apparently the main reason for Britain's unpopularity with the governments and ruling classes of Russia and the two great Germanic Powers—which stood as habitually on the other side. If British devotion to the cause of freedom and self-government faltered among the intrigues and passions at Versailles, and sometimes afterwards, it has nonetheless survived. Despite the tendency of war to produce despotic government, England, unlike even France, is today normally self-governing. Parliament still functions; and Hyde Park still provides one of the world's freest forums. And England, like France, is still the friend of self-determination in Europe. While war and approaching war cause nations to seek strange bedfellows (the American Revolution and the Spanish Civil War are cases in point), the attempted renewal of the Triple Entente in this last year contemplated the preservation, not, like the German-Russian pact, the subjugation, of small nationalities. People who forget that single "causes" have lain behind few wars in history are apt to brand the present British effort as purely imperialist. This charge forms a natural part of bedtime lullabies from Moscow and Berlin; but one pauses in sheer wonder at hearing it from the lips of some who excoriated Mr. Chamberlain for not fighting (unprepared, because his country too long repulsed the thought of force) in September of last year.

There are other things in the record which may evoke kind feelings on our part. Surely Great Britain, despite the Crimean and a series of colonial wars, takes high rank among the friends of peace. In crisis after crisis of the nineteenth century she strove, and sometimes successfully, to ward off war. With our own government she brought arbitration into diplomacy. No great European Power worked harder for peace in 1914 and the years just before; and, since 1919, her record in connection with the League has at least been more praiseworthy than that of any other great nation. Her record is again impressive where a dozen matters which we have at heart (at random, slavery and the slave trade, trade unionism, anti-Semitism, and the freedom of the press) have been concerned. What emerges seems to be that the people of this crowned republic, despite all superficial differences, are in many fundamentals like ourselves. Dr. George Catlin has recently reminded us of the way in which Gladstone summed this up:

> [The American and British peoples] . . . alike prefer the practical to the abstract. They tolerate opinion, with only a reserve upon behalf of decency . . . confine coercion to the province of action, and . . . leave thought . . . entirely free. They set a high value on liberty for its own sake . . . desire to give full scope to the principles of self-reliance in the people . . . mistrust and mislike the centralization of power . . . cherish municipal, local . . . liberties, as nursery grounds . . . for the general training of public virtue and independent spirit . . . regard publicity as the vital air of politics, through which alone . . . the balance of relative rights and claims can be habitually and peaceably adjusted.

If this be true, it would seem difficult for Americans, *as Americans,* to refuse some sympathy to the British in thought and word.

The point at issue

What is in question? Not, of course, participation in the war; but an attitude towards the war; an attitude which may mean some forbearance on our part as regards war measures of the democracies. When John Brown, being a friend of mine, borrows a book without leave at the very time when I am needing it, I say indulgently to myself: "That's just what the old son of a gun *would* do, isn't it?" But if John Brown, being a person for whom I have no liking or respect, does precisely the same thing, the reaction is more apt to be: "I shall have to show that beggar that he can't do such things to me."

Between nations, where mass passions are concerned, the difference is far greater, and its results are likely to be far more serious. And there is another aspect to be thought of. Neutrality in action is something for which the neutral pays only in goods; but where questions of religion and morality are involved, there is danger lest too great an effort to preserve neutrality of sentiment and expression may lead to a deadening of religious and moral sensibilities. Whatever individuals, clerical or lay, may say or do, there lies between the German and British *governments* a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plain issue of paganism as opposed to Christianity. And naturally, the gap in morals—as revealed in the planned "blood purge," the slow torture of the Jews, the poisoning of children's minds with the pornography of the *Stuermer,* the sustained contempt for any and all promises and the employment of brute force as a *normal* method for the achievement of all national ends—is quite as clear.

It is true that the National Socialists could cite precedents for some of their crimes in the deeds of Queen Elizabeth's bravoes or Cromwell's fanatics or the Black and Tans in Ireland, and in the oppression, spoliation and religious persecution which went on there for centuries. But the British people as a whole, including a high proportion of their statesmen, have been almost incredibly ignorant of conditions beyond the Irish Sea; and have shown in nothing else the disregard for justice and charity so evident in their dealings with the Irish. In fact, nothing even approaching the contemptuous and complete repudiation of morality in public affairs now habitual in Moscow and Berlin has, at the worst of times, been adopted by the British people or by their government. This statement, I venture to assert, is not propaganda or even opinion, but plain history as written by non-British historians. In face of a basic conflict as regards both religion and morality, the wrongs of the Weimar Republic, infringements of international law, or elements of selfishness in war aims must be relegated to second place. No one wants war hysteria or peace hysteria or hysteria of any kind: no Christian can endorse any hatred of *persons.* But there is an obligation to hate evil. One may therefore ask whether, as between a government which supports the practice of Christianity and customarily observes the rules of Christian morality, and one which, unable to exist in an atmosphere of Christian ethics, must attempt the destruction of all Christianity, we should not guard against neutrality of sentiment. And "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

A Trade Unionist

The career of an old-style labor leader prods a colleague to writing down a few reflections.

By **William Collins**

ON THE MORNING of Labor Day, 1939, a solemn Mass of Requiem was celebrated at the church of St. Paul the Apostle, Troy, N. Y., for the repose of the soul of John M. O'Hanlon, who had served as Secretary-Treasurer of the New York State Federation of Labor for many years. He was the connecting link between labor union representatives of today and those who organized the Federation in 1864 as a protest against legislation which made it a misdemeanor for groups of workers to combine for the purpose of conducting a strike. Leaving his native city of Dublin as a boy, he had followed in the footsteps of millions of his race to the new world of opportunity and freedom.

He was early apprenticed to the printing trade and joined his local union in 1893; here he developed one of the most remarkable personalities in the American trade union movement. His first effort took the form of a publication called the *Legislative News,* which he printed himself and sent to trade unions throughout the State, giving them their first real knowledge of legislation. Those were the days when "labor" bills contained cleverly concealed jokers. He developed a method of scrutinizing bills introduced in the legislature, for no matter which branch of the government, that seemed uncanny. He became known as the legislative watch dog guarding for any bills that in any way attempted to be detrimental to the worker. To have seen him walking through the Capitol at Albany, one would have thought he might have been a humble visitor to some assemblyman, he was so unassuming and reserved. Yet when he walked into committee rooms where hearings were being held, he was given respect and attention by the legislators. He was the best known personality around the Capitol building in Albany while the legislature was in session. For the past twenty-five years, newspapermen, elected officials and groups outside of the labor movement who might be seeking information about labor legislation found it through the medium of his small office on South Hawk Street. Every executive from Governor Odell to Governor Lehman trusted and respected him for his diligence and faithful service to the workers of the State. Former Governor Alfred E. Smith offered him an appointment to the Workmen's Compensation Board, but he would not leave his work with the labor movement. He belonged to the early school of trade unionists who took their obligation seriously and without any thought of personal profit.

Those familiar with labor legislative work see

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in his passing an irreparable loss to the labor movement. During the long period he served it, he saw the regulation of convict labor, the abolition of the sweat shop and the fire trap, the regulation of hours and working conditions for women in industry, the enactment of public health laws and education laws which have been continuously extended and improved. Workmen's compensation, old age and unemployment insurance and other social measures have been passed. The culmination of all this is the State's Labor Relations Act, legally giving the worker the right to organize and bargain collectively.

This legislative program was initiated, fostered and guided by this trade unionist in his official capacity as Chairman of the Legislative Committee in his early years and as Secretary-Treasurer of the State Federation of Labor for the past twenty years. Every branch of labor in the State knew of his splendid work, and re-elected him unanimously year after year, until his recent election at the New York City convention, where the greatest parade of labor ever held in that city welcomed him with the other officers and delegates to the first convention held in the city in seventy-five years.

He worked quietly

Those who read in the public press of the activities of groups which strive to preserve civil liberties never saw his name mentioned. He was not of the platform type. The woods are full of those who talk liberty. When bills poured into the legislative hopper sometimes at the rate of two hundred a day, he would be found at his desk with printed bills piled high, oblivious to all the conference talk around him; the hunt was on for any legislation that would interfere or restrict the orderly progress of the worker. His contribution to detecting and stopping inimical legislation was more fruitful than all the declamations from the public rostrum.

He had listened for more than fifty years to the speeches and protests of labor. In the early years he saw how the legislature log-rolled its program through without a thought for the workers of the State. He never had time to be discouraged. He introduced and then reintroduced labor bills that were lost in the previous session until he succeeded in getting action and passage, and they were placed on the statute books of the State. Every legislator for the past twenty-five years who went to Albany was familiar with his methods. No blustering or threatening. He spoke quietly and earnestly. He arranged for the hearings on labor bills. He sat with the legislative committee and introduced the speakers in favor of the bills. He rarely talked himself. There is a story of his visiting a government department where he was asked about a certain legislative ruling that had been made years before. Without hesitating he gave the date, the name of the government official who made the ruling, and then from memory quoted the ruling verbatim.

At a hearing held in Albany to put vestibules on street cars, an anti-union company brought a dozen burly motormen to protest their installation because they claimed they would not be able to see through them. O'Hanlon quietly remarked to the committee there were periods in men's lives when they could not see anything.

In his work for the labor movement, he came into contact with all kinds of legislative programs, proposed by zealous advocates, with nothing less than the millennium for their ultimate goal. He brought them down to the level of his trade union experience, with his thorough knowledge of legislative procedure and the tempo of social and industrial public opinion. His attitude toward labor legislation grew out of his trade union activities. The trade union was not the result of any leader, but grew out of the evils of industrial evolution. Where it was not possible for the trade union to correct those evils, legislation was the next step. Legislation was not the cure all; it could only protect the individual worker under the law. This had been fully demonstrated in the Workmen's Compensation Act, which, as originally passed, was intended to reduce the number of deaths and accidents in industry. With industry becoming more mechanized, with speed up and mass production methods, deaths and accidents increased. The workmen's compensation legislation stopped the employers from treating these casualties of industry like worn-out tools, to be thrown on the human scrap heap.

His task with labor legislation called for weary hours of discussion between the cure-all-nows and the conservatives. Whilst the debate waxed hot and furious, he would sit with his pencil and pad and make his notes. At the appropriate moment he would address the chairman, and ask if he could read what he thought would be the basis of a proposal. It was usually voted to leave that basis to the legislative committee to shape up, he being its Chairman. His sound judgment after many years of legislative work was recognized and appreciated by the hundreds of delegates who attended the annual conventions of the State Federation of Labor.

Talking with him at one of the recent convention sessions at the Commodore Hotel, I reminded him of the great change that had come to organized labor, with hundreds of delegates representing more than a million workers in the State. At the turn of the present century most of those interested in labor legislation would congregate in McEwan's saloon, at the rear of the Capitol, where the beer glasses (at five cents a fill) were large and the free lunch plentiful. He remarked

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that his wish for organized labor was that it could conduct itself as well in prosperity as it had done through the years of adversity. He had lived through the years of the Great War and the "boom" years when the labor movement increased its membership into the millions. He saw the depression and deflation, when five-balloon-tire cars were reduced to flats, and only those who had been through the earlier struggle were able to keep their unions from destruction. Through the depression when time was beginning to take its toll of his long years of work, he rallied the forces of organized labor, so that long delayed social legislation was piloted through the legislature with consideration for the proper enactment and administration of these social laws.

He lived a useful life. His work was acknowledged by the presence at the funeral Mass of the Lieutenant Governor; the Governor was absent only because of official duties in Syracuse; but his message of sympathy to the family also paid tribute to his service. State Department officials, city officials and representatives of all branches of organized labor attended the church ceremony and the simple services at the grave. He went to his rest with those other New York trade unionists, Sam Gompers, the cigar maker who was President of the State Federation in the early years before the AFL, and P. J. McGuire, the carpenter, who wrote the resolution that created Labor Day. The aged parish priest who concluded the service at the church spoke words of comfort to the bereaved family that can only come from close association and understanding. The Irish immigrant boy who grew to American manhood did not have to wear any official dignity or title to distinguish his work; he lived the faith that was in him; he was a trade unionist.

Answer to a Reply

One of The Commonweal Contributing Editors analyzes and counters John Kelly's "Reply to Jacques Maritain."

By William O'Meara

THE ARTICLE "Reply to Jacques Maritain" (THE COMMONWEAL, December 29) is offered as a criticism of Maritain's views expressed in the issues of October 13 and November 24. The "Reply" makes one general charge and four or five more specific charges against Maritain, on the basis of Maritain's statements in this magazine. The general charge is that (a) Maritain has entered into the atmosphere of the present war with alacrity and enthusiasm, thus painfully demonstrating that the first and greatest sacrifice which a nation in arms requires of its citizens is (b) the sacrifice of reason itself. More specifically, it is alleged (1) that Maritain's statements indicate a grave lack of focus on the objective realities of the situation, (2) that his statements are (a) politically naïve and (b) theologically unsound, (3) that Maritain has confused his cultural with his religious affinities, (4) that he seeks to proclaim the justice of the war being waged by France and England on the basis of Catholic theology, "whereas in the whole corpus of that theology very little warrant will be found for making such a justification."

Let us take the last contention: that Maritain declares that the present war is a just one on the part of France and Britain on the basis of Catholic theology. Now in the two articles considered by the "Reply," Maritain simply does not appeal to theology at all. Although he could well have appealed to the principles of Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas, as a matter of fact he made use only of the norms of natural ethics. In view of this, it is somewhat difficult to understand the meaning of the other related contention of the "Reply": that Maritain's statements are theologically unsound. However, the "Reply" treats Maritain's views as if they were theological and differs with him on theological grounds.

The "Reply" quotes some texts from various Catholic theologians. Happily, all of these—and others—can be found in that well-known work which carries an *imprimatur,* "The Catholic Tradition of the Law of Nations," by John Eppstein. In connection with the "Reply's" first four texts, a few comments from "The Catholic Tradition" may be of interest. Along with a number of others in similar vein, Eppstein regards these texts as expressing the "notion that war was intrinsically evil . . .," a notion which "must have continued to dwell in the minds of *certain* Christian thinkers *for about a century.*" (Italics mine, "Catholic Tradition," p. 38.) It is further noted that Tertullian, who had previously been attached to the Empire and accepted the army as an institution, after joining the heretical sect of the Montanists condemned all military service in the work cited by the "Reply." The source of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Canons of Hippolytus is not certainly known, but Hippolytus was "at one time anti-pope but reconciled to the Roman Church before his death in exile in 236 . . ." (p. 37). This same book calls attention to the "pathetic inconsistency" to be found in the *De divinis institutionibus* of Lactantius cited by the "Reply." All in all, the Patristic views which Maritain is asserted to have chosen to "scrap" do not make up a very authoritative assembly. Certainly, Maritain disagrees with these writers, and in this he joins not only Saint Augustine but also "the whole Augustinian school of writers upon the morality of war, from Saint Augustine himself to the Spanish neo-scholastics twelve hundred years afterwards" (p. 38).

Causes, remote and proximate

The question of causes, remote and proximate, may now be considered. (A certain ambiguity in the terms *cause* and *just cause* should be kept in mind. Both may refer to certain antecedent conditions which enter into the effectuating of the occurrence and continuance of the war; both may also refer to the final cause, or the end in view of those warring.) Maritain's position may be stated briefly. Many antecedent conditions have combined to effectuate the present war. Some of these are remote, i.e., preceded the outbreak of hostilities by a considerable length of time; some are what he terms decisive, i.e., temporally adjacent to the outbreak and actually entering as causative factors into the decision to fight. The "Reply" represents Maritain as being uncertain concerning the cause, as sweeping aside the remote causes. The "Reply" further suggests that according to Maritain, Hitler's opposition to Christianity and "a sudden desire for a crusade to save Christianity" also entered into the assembly of conditions causing the war. These statements constitute a misrepresentation of Maritain's views. He wrote in the issue of November 24: "When the decisive cause of a war is fidelity to a promise made to a people which is a victim of savage aggression and the decision to resist, at the cost of blood, a boundless will to domination which recognizes neither good faith nor respect for treaties nor respect for elementary human rights, then that war is a just war." The "Reply" cites only the first part of Maritain's assertion, the above quotation, i.e., up to "savage aggression," thus unduly narrowing the meaning of his statement. The evidence offered by the "Reply" for the statement that Maritain is uncertain about the cause is based upon an avoidable misunderstanding of his first contribution.

Maritain's words cited in the fifth paragraph of the "Reply" occur in his first letter where he is developing the thought that the Russo-German alliance has removed the false alternative hitherto believed necessary by many persons of good will between two opposing evils. This alliance, Maritain continues, has made plain the truth that "there is only one revolution . . . in essence directed against the first principles of all Christian civilization, against everything which indicates the mark of God on man, against everything which implies respect for the human person, for justice and for truth, against everything which relates to greatness and liberty of the human soul." Now whatever extenuating circumstances may be adduced for the present conduct of the leaders of Germany and Russia, it is difficult to see how anyone of intelligence and goodwill could object to Maritain's statement of the good things against which the forces of Germany and Russia are at present directed. Actually, Maritain nowhere states, explicitly or implicitly, that the governments of France and Britain have been actuated, in the declaration of war, by Germany's opposition to Christianity. In his first letter Maritain simply states the same cause as in his second, but in another way, asserting that it is the truth, demonstrated by the invasion and destruction of Poland, that appeasing concessions could no longer save peace except at the uncalled for sacrifice of elementary human rights and the heritage of Western civilization.

It is, further, false to say that Maritain "sweeps aside as 'remote' " all causes other than the decisive cause. While he does not feel called upon to write at length concerning the remote causes, he does mention them in general terms. It is surely ridiculous to suggest, as the "Reply" does, that for Maritain remote causes are not real causes. His judgment, however, upon the justice of the war is founded, and rightly so, upon the decisive cause. And the decisive cause, the event which concretely decided the crucial question, to make war or not to make war, was Germany's unjustified invasion of Poland. Contrary to the statement of the "Reply" that the governments of France and England have not offered the invasion of Poland "to their peoples as the cause of the war," the French declaration of war states:

> The aggression which the German government committed against Poland September 1, despite methods of peaceful settlement of differences whereto it had subscribed, and despite appeals for a free discussion or mediation which the most authoritative voices addressed to it, and in violation of commitments most freely undertaken to Poland herself and to all state signatories to the war renunciation pact of August 27, 1928 (the Kellogg-Briand Pact) placed the French Republic face to face with her assistance obligations to Poland—obligations arising from public treaties known to the Reich government. . . .
>
> Consequently, as a result of the German aggression against Poland, a state of war exists between France and Germany. . . .

A similar statement is to be found in the joint ultimatum of Great Britain and France to Ger-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

many, and indeed, it is common knowledge that the deciding factor was the invasion of Poland.

Allied war aims

Much has been made of the alleged indefiniteness of the war aims of the Allies by the writer of the "Reply" and by others. No doubt the Allied governments and their spokesmen are open to criticism on account of their statements in this regard. At the same time anyone expecting a blueprint of Allied intentions after they have won the war would surely be guilty of the political naïveté with which the "Reply" charges Maritain. Recent events and statements from such authoritative sources as the British Ambassador at Washington have made it clear that the French and British recognize the mistakes and injustices of the Versailles treaty and give even hardened realists good ground for hope that the next peace will not be a one-sided "victor's peace." In any case, it is plainly not an absurd opinion to hold that such worthy aims as the restoration of the freedom of non-German peoples and the liberation of Europe from the constant threat of war are proper ones which would constitute "a good to be effected" and "an evil to be avoided" (Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* IIa-IIae, Q. XL, art. 1, c).

It has been shown, up to this point, that no sufficient evidence has been adduced by the "Reply" to support the statement that Maritain's views are theologically unsound. Maritain, let us recall, did not discuss the question theologically. But what of the attempted demonstration that there is "very little warrant" in Catholic theology for making a justification of the war which France and England are waging? The justice of one side or the other in any given war is not something demanding an infallible decision on the part of the Church. Maritain, on grounds of human reason and without going fully into his reasons, has stated his conviction that the present war is a just one on the part of France and England. This does not mean that war is an unmixed good, but merely that in these particular circumstances the decision to make war was morally good and justified. Only the complete pacifist holds the view that war is in all circumstances unjustifiable. In Catholic theology there is every warrant for the view that there can be a just war and none at all for absolute pacifism. It is true some modern Catholic theologians seem inclined to advocate the opinion "that no modern war can be justified"—the "Reply" attributes such a view to Monsignor Barry O'Toole—but it is not as yet very positively asserted nor very widely held. The "Reply" does not explicitly advance this opinion. If it had done so, the logic of the article would have been clearer, for if it is contended that no modern war can be justified then, obviously, anyone who, like Maritain, declares that the present war is just, is in error. On such a view, it would not be necessary to examine circumstances or alternatives or anything else: if no modern war can be justified, then Maritain and those in agreement with him are wrong. But it remains for the writer of the "Reply" and those who agree with him to show the truth, either philosophically or theologically, of the questionable thesis that no modern war can be justified.

A number of other deficiencies in the "Reply" may be passed over for reasons of space to come at once to the concluding point: the assertion concerning Maritain's alleged "alacrity and enthusiasm" regarding the war. This point is more fully dealt with in a letter from Mr. W. H. Gharrity in this week's "Communications." Let it be said here, however, that to identify Maritain's enthusiasm for "the strength of soul and . . . moral greatness" of England and France and for the promise of a new day for Europe which he sees to be portended, with Nazi glorification of war as a good in itself, is monstrously unjust.

The "Reply," then, has failed to substantiate a single one of its charges. It has offered no evidence for Maritain's alleged lack of focus on the realities of the situation or confusion of his cultural with his religious affinities. The appeal of the "Reply" to Catholic theology is irrelevant to the issue. Final judgment concerning the rightness or wrongness of Maritain's political judgment must await the verdict of history. The present paper has been concerned only with Maritain's views as expressed in his first two letters and with the "Reply." It is obviously not offered as a complete exposition or justification of Maritain's whole position.

Archery Class

The placid order of the lawn
  And ivy walls that hold the light
Will not change while the bows are drawn
  And arrows flash away in flight.

Bright is that target in the sun
  With those gay feathers quivering!
The girls step forward, one by one—
  The bending bow, the vibrant string!

Some thrill that once the hunt had known
  Stirs here by these untroubled walls—
Lights dance in hair the wind has blown
  Whether the arrow strikes or falls.

And laughter bright as pollen drifts
  Upon the wind before they go . . .
Before a surer archer lifts
  A swifter arrow to the bow.

GLENN WARD DRESBACH.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

SO MANY letters have reached me from so many different parts of the country, and of such high quality in thought and expression, commenting upon my articles dealing with the German mystic, Hieronymus Jaegen, that I am sure the subject deserves further publicity and discussion. There must be a very deep and widespread desire working in many souls for cooperation in efforts on the part both of the clergy and the laity to advance corporate organization of the innermost forces of Christianity along the lines traced by the German business man and apostle of Catholic action. In the midst of the profound upheaval and conflict of all the powers that rule or affect human life today, of which the wars now raging are merely an exterior expression, this resurgence of the Catholic instinct for not merely the study but the actual practice of the fundamental spiritual life of Christian mysticism undoubtedly will play a great part, as it has done in previous epochs of social crisis. All the strenuous efforts of philosophers, statesmen, soldiers, publicists, men of affairs and leaders of public opinion to guide the way for humanity out of our present distress and darkness toward better conditions will assuredly fail unless aided and enlightened by the few rare spirits who from time to time appear in order to prove by their lives as well as by their words and deeds that the Christian spirit of sanctity must be recognized as the most practical of all the many ideals of the human soul; that it is not the mere dream of a few poetical spirits but actually the strongest of all realities, and, when neglected or ignored, the best efforts of all social reformers and religious leaders sadly fail.

Among the letters I have received is one from a relative of Hieronymus Jaegen, the Reverend George Jaegen, of Winona, Minn., who calls attention to the fact that there is an American version of a brief biography of the mystic, translated by Father Jaegen from a pamphlet published by the Jaegen Society of Treves and published by Our Sunday Visitor Press. And the following letter is welcome proof that a movement similar to that initiated in Germany by the Jaegen Society has taken root in our own soil. A copy of the booklet referred to in the letter has reached me. It is to be presumed that the ecclesiastical permission for its public distribution will be given in due time, as the work of the society referred to has been approved by a pastor in the Brooklyn diocese acting for the Most Reverend Bishop, while still another pastor in Brooklyn allows two units of the group to meet in an assembly room under his charge, while the central chapter of the society has been granted the great privilege of singing the Divine Office in a chapel wherein is reserved the Most Blessed Sacrament. The letter is printed here for the encouragement of other correspondents who may wish to communicate with its writer in order to gain more information by means of which to aid in their own efforts to cultivate the mystical life in cooperation with like-minded aspirants.

Approved Workmen, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Williams:

Your papers in THE COMMONWEAL December 1 and 15 on Jaegen and the Jaegen Society interest me profoundly, and your remark December 15 "that in the matter of organizing the activities of those Catholics who have a desire to know more about, and . . . themselves to follow the mystical life within the general life of the Church, we are rather backward in this country" has been the conviction of this writer through practically the entire course of a lifetime.

The conviction was so compelling that a number of years ago I undertook to design the framework for an order of laymen to be dedicated to the purgative life. The fraternity would be bound to absolute and unswerving loyalty to the See of Rome and the Catholic Hierarchy; every member must have been baptized and confirmed, and must be a practicing Catholic. The other requirements would be that the man must have a clear perception of the nature of personal honesty and honor, and that having engaged in the work he should be faithful. The basic thought consisted in an appeal to the normal every-day Catholic man, the belief being that he is fundamentally true and loyal but that he is indifferent to the high call which the Church addresses to each of her children, simply because he does not realize the implications in his profession of the faith.

Through the succeeding years a long and laborious course has been developed. An attempt has been made to include in it subjects for thought, study and effort in sufficient diversity to attract men with various inclinations, but so coordinated that all might tend toward the one great objective: "To present himself approved unto God."

The vision of such a brotherhood required that the course of the work should include certain primary, even elementary, instruction; but that it should be so designed as first to train men's minds to think; so that the mind might function more profitably in assisting the will.

Fifteen years ago the first part of the work having been drafted we began the hunt for the workmen; and at this time we have two units whose total membership does not exceed thirty-five persons. Our call does not make a wide appeal, as we were forewarned in the beginning that it would not, but the work has continued and those who have remained with us (more than one hundred have come and gone) are zealous and faithful and convinced that we are in the right way. We have composed a pamphlet which outlines the aim and the mode of our undertaking. This has been printed, but it is not being distributed because we await official permission from the Chancellor of the Brooklyn Diocese. However, I take the liberty to enclose for your personal information a copy of this proposed pamphlet.

From what I have tried to outline I hope you will have observed that ours is not intended to be a sodality designed exclusively to "bring together and direct devotional zeal"; it is not a series of study clubs, neither does it profess to be an educational institution. Some of my confrères have been so impressed by your two papers on Jaegen that they have urged me to communicate to you their conviction that we are at work on a plan of action in some respects not unlike

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that of the Jaegen Society. Our direct aim is to attain to the purgative life which it seems to us will prepare the soul for the attainment of Christian perfection.

Certainly we are consciously striving to become what your correspondent in the paper of December 15 envisions: "What a wonderful thing it would be if a group of Catholic men who have to live in the world could get together and in a small and humble manner seek to attain Christian perfection for themselves and others by living the ideal Catholic life and putting it into practice in their daily lives." We are so ambitious as to hope one day that we may have a community house, but at the present time we have no funds and no men of material wealth among our brotherhood.

We are very happy to have read your two inspiring papers and my purpose in writing this letter is to make known to you that there is at least one society, however obscure, which is definitely at work to accomplish something in this country similar to the Jaegen Society.

WM. J. TOWNSEND.

Communications

MEN NEEDED

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Men needed for jobs is such an unusual story these days that we hope you will give your readers an opportunity to see this communication.

The demand for competent managers by consumer cooperative food stores along the Atlantic seaboard is greater than the available number of qualified men. To aid candidates in qualifying for such positions, Eastern Cooperative Wholesale, Rochdale Institute and Consumer Distribution Corporation have pooled their resources for a sixteen-week training program, aided by a grant from the Good Will Fund.

We shall be glad to send a detailed announcement to anyone combining general interest in store management and in the retail food trade with interest in economic and social problems and in consumers cooperation.

The course will start on February 5. Not more than thirty students can be accepted.

RUDOLF TREUENFELS, *Secretary,*
Council for Cooperative Business Training.

FATHER DIVINE

Cleveland, O.

TO the Editors: Sincerely aspiring to voice the opinion of many other readers of THE COMMONWEAL, allow me to express my appreciation for Mr. George Streator's article on Father Divine (December 15, 1939).

No Negro myself, and no follower of Father Divine, I nevertheless am very much in accord with Mr. Streator's conclusion that he (Divine) "has, perhaps unconsciously, contributed to the economic betterment of his people." Acquainted with that worthy's activities only through amused references in the daily, weekly and monthly periodical press, I have been impressed only with the good the man has done among his long-suffering colored followers. Wisdom is not always a prime requisite to service to humanity; love and charity will frequently serve instead of that undoubtedly admirable quality.

Lest sophisticated American whites of ancient stock die laughing at the seeming outward idiocies of the Father Divine movement, let them recall such eminently blond religious developments as "The Mighty I Am Spirit" and others of its ilk . . . not to mention those economic cults which insure that the believer will "Be Successful" and will "Get Ahead Financially."

J. K. MADURA.

JUST WAR

Chippewa Falls, Wis.

TO the Editors: . . . I have neither the temerity nor the scholarship to invite a passage at arms with Mr. Kelly on whether, as Mr. Maritain insists, France and Great Britain are fighting a just war. I shall not attempt to invoke the authority of the Fathers of the Church either for or against. Mr. Kelly has done a first rate job there and I am content to let it go at that. It seems to me that he has proven very conclusively that as far as the fathers are concerned, "some do and some don't."

Moreover I very thoroughly agree with Mr. Kelly that the remote causes of this war are not nearly so remote as Mr. Maritain seems to imply. I would be the last person in this so safe America—so safe so far—to suggest that neither France nor Britain has any responsibility for the current debacle. Nor would I fly into a rage if it were suggested that the United States of North America is not entirely without responsibility. . . .

So I have no right to take Mr. Kelly too severely to task if he insists, as it seems he does, that there is no justice on either side. I can only say that if because of greed or fear or bungling or even negligence I should permit my back yard to get all littered up with trash and if the trash should finally start to burn, I should feel myself bound not only for my own sake but for the sake of the neighbors to help put out the fire. . . .

So the fire rages and it seems to me that Mr. Kelly goes quite beyond the bounds of Christian charity when he insists that Jacques Maritain is enthusiastic about it, that the odor of the holocaust is sweet in his nostrils. . . .

"There could be no more painful demonstration of this," he goes on, "than the alacrity and enthusiasm with which M. Maritain has entered into the atmosphere of the present war." Later in his article he says, "What is most amazing in M. Maritain's position is his apparent enthusiasm for this war." I cannot understand why Mr. Kelly qualified his indictment, why he wrote "apparent," because he most obviously doesn't believe the enthusiasm is anything less than real and actual and sordid. He makes no effort to give Mr. Maritain any benefit of doubt. On the contrary, he quotes phrases and sentences from Mr. Maritain's article and covering letter not only to prove the enthusiasm but to link it finally to the *Blut und Boden* of National Socialism. And having done this to his own amazing satisfaction, Mr. Kelly attempts to nail it all down by saying, "But when a Christian attempts to adjust the commandment of Christ to the special circumstance of the world and the time, he cannot do it so glibly or with such enthusiasm as M. Maritain displays." The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inference seemingly is that he cannot do it and remain a Christian. . . .

For my own part I am convinced that Mr. Maritain is neither glib nor enthusiastic, not glib at all and not enthusiastic at any rate in the sense proposed by Mr. Kelly. To me both Maritain's article and covering letter read like a hymn of joy and thanksgiving, a joy and thanksgiving not unmixed with surprise and so perhaps not unmixed with enthusiasm. But not a joy in war and the dreadful ravages of war, not a thanksgiving for the burnt offerings of war. It seems to me that it is joy and thanksgiving born of the discovery and the increasing certainty that western men still cherish in their souls, and cherish sufficiently to fight for them, those dear-bought Christian values of human dignity and inviolability and ordered freedom which make man truly a son of God and which should make all men stout champions of God's Holy Law. . . .

Having studied closely the machinations of European chancelleries from Versailles to Munich; having watched Lenin stand Hegel on his feet and Stalin stand Hegel on his head again; having watched the triumphant march of the material dialectic in the minds and hearts of Western leaders and peoples; having seen it take on one form in Russia, another in Italy and still another in Germany; having seen it bathe Spain in blood, obliterate Austria and destroy Czechoslovakia; having seen the zigzag retreat of the so-called democracies of Europe before it; having seen the high content of it even in democratic values and democratic institutions, I should think Mr. Maritain's joy and thanksgiving should be quite understandable when he discovers that other concepts and older values still have real validity in Europe. And if because of this he sees in the present night not a night of despair but an eve of resurrection, surely we ought not anathematize him for daring to believe that European peoples may still appeal with some confidence to God's justice.

W. H. Gharrity.

LABOR AND VIOLENCE

Woodmere, N. Y.

TO the Editors: My very warm thanks to Mr. Evans (January 5) for his kind words about the ACTU (Assoiation of Catholic Trade Unionists) and his fine exposition of the problems involved in establishing sound Christian relations between capital and labor.

I also thank Mr. Bouvier (January 5) for the chance to take up a few non-violent cudgels for my article, "Labor and Violence."

Mr. Bouvier accuses me of innumerable crimes, notable among which are my pretense of impartiality, which masks obvious "heart-leaning" and "special pleading" in behalf of labor; "specious" reasoning; omission of proof and unpleasant facts; toleration of labor racketeers (if not actual collaboration with them), etc., etc.

First I plead unashamedly guilty to special pleading; not guilty to pretense of impartiality. . . .

I also plead guilty to the charge of neglecting the Wagner Act, that Magna Charta of labor's right to organize, now being so unjustly and unintelligently attacked by the enemies of labor. I should have praised it and the Labor Board even more highly as forces for the elimination of violence in industry. For evidence supporting this view and the impartiality of the Board I refer Mr. Bouvier to the thoroughly documented exposition of the Act and its administration, "Unions of Their Own Choosing," by R. R. Brooks (Yale University Press). I would also inquire for the proof of his charge that the Act is marked by "inequity" and that the Board is clearly "partial, discriminating, biased and in many instances radically CIO."

As for toleration of labor racketeers, I must apologize for throwing Mr. Bouvier off on a false scent. When I wrote "we are not interested in the activities of labor racketeers," I meant "not interested for the purposes of this article." In a three-page article only the fundamentals can be covered, and though for Mr. Bouvier the racketeer is the Hamlet of the labor movement, my own Hamlet was the average worker who wants to make an honest living and isn't looking for trouble. . . .

Mr. Bouvier also questions my statement that in 1937 60 percent of all strikes were called because employers would not recognize unions chosen by a majority of their employees. I based this figure on the very academic opus, "Strikes," by Professor John I. Griffin of Columbia, which states that 70 percent of 1937's strikes were called for union recognition.

From my own experience in the labor movement, I believe it safe to say that not more than one in ten unions is willing or able to call a strike without the support of a majority. I gave the benefit of the doubt, made it one in seven, and settled for 60 percent.

Finally, Mr. Bouvier scorches the page with the charge that I present "not a scintilla of credible evidence" for my statement that labor laws like Oregon's were not "designed to bring the people peace," as alleged by the *Times,* but "designed more often by anti-labor interests to hamstring unions in the exercise of their just rights."

Guessing at the meaning of "scintilla," I refer Mr. Bouvier back to my article, which quotes the same *Times* as admitting that Oregon already had criminal laws adequate to "bring the people peace," which police proceeded to do before the new laws had been passed. These same criminal laws (against assault, property damage and threat of same) are on the books of every state and municipality in the country. It is also clear that the labor laws mentioned actually do hamstring unions in the exercise of their just rights, namely peaceful picketing, use of strike and boycott, fund-raising and free political action, as I showed in the article by reference to the Oregon law. It isn't likely that such laws are designed by pro-labor interests. In my hot-headed way I conclude they are designed by anti-labor interests, since I have yet to hear of labor legislation designed by one who qualifies for neither category.

Of course there is a loop-hole in my reasoning, the assumption that a union does have the right to picket peacefully, strike, boycott, raise funds and take political action. Mr. Bouvier may hold that there is "not a scintilla of credible evidence" to support such an assumption. If so, I refer him to Monsignor Ryan's article on "Labor Unions" in the "Catholic Encyclopedia." . . .

John C. Cort.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Stage & Screen

Christmas Eve

THERE IS certainly nothing which can offend the moral sense in "Christmas Eve"; indeed in its basic philosophy and in its characterization it might well have come from the pen of a devout Catholic. It tells the story of a Polish woman married to a genial but bibulous Irishman and her rather neurasthenic daughter. Hanka is devoted to her husband, has had four children by him and is about to have a fifth. She is absolutely healthy in mind and body and soul. In contrast we have her daughter Julia, in love with a perfectly normal young man, but fidgety and querulous, at once ashamed of her father and devoted to him, with a chip on her shoulder when she thinks he is being belittled and yet herself revolted by his drinking and his language. When the young man she loves kisses her, she thinks she has been degraded. In short she is somewhat what has come to be called a Freudian case, though it is to Gustav Eckstein's credit that he never once mentions Freud. Her problem becomes resolved when she holds her mother's new born baby in her arms, giving vent to the free expression of her essentially maternal instinct and completely reconciling her with her young man. So far there is of course nothing which the most censorious could possibly condemn. The play, both in its informing philosophy and in the tang and humanity of its character-drawing, proved one of the most interesting productions of a season so far none too well filled with interest.

The last act of the play, however, had a scene which shocked many, a scene in which a baby is born upon the stage. I want to state at once as far as I personally was concerned the scene was true and moving. It was done discreetly, even reverently. But its effect upon many others in the audience was evidently not what it was to me. It was this scene which probably caused the quick failure of the play. On looking back on it I am also convinced that having such a scene, its failure was inevitable. There are perfectly natural things which are impossible in the theatre, and child-birth is one of them. It is too intimate a thing to become a spectacle, no matter how reverently it may have been conceived by the author and performed by the actors. For placed upon the stage, in the minds of many, its true beauty and meaning become coarsened and degraded. Whether or not this is as it should be, I am not going to attempt to determine. It is enough that it is so.

The cast which Mr. McClintic provided was admirable. After twelve years' absence from the New York stage Beth Merrill made her reappearance as Hanka, giving a moving performance of the Polish peasant wife. Miss Merrill's sincerity was equalled by her charm. Katherine Locke in the difficult and ungrateful part of the daughter showed variety of mood, and it was, all things considered, the best performance she has turned in since "Having a Wonderful Time." Mildred Natwick was the grandmother, and though the part gave her little to do, she was as ever effective. James Rennie as the Irish-American husband played with humor and gusto, Kent Smith was likable as the lover, Robert Ross sympathetic as the family doctor and Vincent Donehue admirable as the fourteen-year-old boy. Mr. McClintic's direction was as ever most sensitive. *(At the Henry Miller Theatre.)*

GRENVILLE VERNON.

"Tell Me About de Rabbits, George"

"BEST" lists are popping all over the place. Here are the pictures, from the hundreds I saw last year, that stand out for me as the best of the crop. "Goodbye, Mr. Chips," "Stagecoach," "Wuthering Heights," "Dark Victory," "Made for Each Other," "Love Affair," "Juarez," "The City," "Stanley and Livingstone," "The End of a Day," "Full Confession," "Harvest," "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," "Babes in Arms," "Gone With the Wind," "Gulliver's Travels."

Hollywood starts its 1940 with eyes definitely on the adult trade. "Of Mice and Men," superbly produced and directed by Lewis Milestone on a small budget without name stars, makes many big pictures look like a waste of money. Eugene Solow's script, toned down somewhat but even more emotionally moving than the stage play, loses none of the effectiveness of John Steinbeck's vigorous novel. From the exciting opening, when the chase is already on, right through the touching story in which the little creatures that are men lose their battle for dignity, to the very finish when George thinks he is doing right by shooting the dim-witted, brutish Lennie, you are stirred by these pitiful people who cannot succeed even with their best-laid schemes. Beautifully photographed California farm scenes are contrasted with the loneliness and unhappiness of the workers. Your emotions get a severe workout during the tense dog-shooting scene that presages the finale, when Curley pummels Lenine's face, when Candy reminisces over his twenty-year-old fling, when powerful Lennie, who loves rabbits and soft, furry things too much, and Curley's sensuous wife, who spells trouble, sit in the barn and babble simultaneously about their ideals of happiness. Under Milestone's direction, the entire cast work well together to make this film alive and plausible.

Another film not for the squeamish is "His Girl Friday." Directed by Howard Hawks from Charles Lederer's screenplay, it has most of the sparkle, wit and fun of "The Front Page" (the rowdy Hecht-MacArthur comedy of ten years ago) on which it is vaguely based. This time, however, Hildy Johnson is a girl-reporter who is tired of being a newspaper man. She wants to be a respectable woman, but her ex-husband, the managing editor, won't let her. For him, divorce isn't permanent—and neither is anything else. The picture skims along quickly with snappy repartee and situations (not always in the best of taste) in which reporters are again shown as hardened skunks (but softies underneath). The editor tries all tricks to prevent Hildy from leaving the paper and him. Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant play the piece for all that's in it, and get good support from Ralph Bellamy, John Qualen, Helen Mack and Gene Lockhart.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books of the Week

About a Possible Future

The Idea of a Christian Society. T. S. Eliot. Harcourt. $1.50.

EVIDENTLY Mr. Eliot's latest book is a strange thing. One person can read it and find it a fundamental criticism of the society of our day, both "democratic" and commu-fascist; another person finds in it a subtle propaganda for the totalitarian state in a theocratic form. I must confess that my own reading led entirely to the former conclusion, but I find that some of my brother reviewers came to the latter. And I confess also that I am at a loss to see how in the world they managed to do it. It is this to me (even after a careful second reading) startling interpretation put on "The Idea of a Christian Society" as well as the somewhat cool reception the book has received in the press that leads me to write at length on Mr. Eliot's ideas.

But before getting to the ideas, it is only just to say a few words about the way they are presented, the style of the book. Most of the serious—and would-be serious—analyses of social disorder that have been spawned in publishers' offices the last several seasons are about as painful reading as could well be imagined. Indeed only a sense of social duty can induce a person who likes his English neat to struggle through them. The technicians make no pretense that they know how to write; the professors seem almost deliberately to ignore what they may have of talent in expression so as to avoid that loss of academic prestige which evidently attaches to any scholar who expresses his ideas clearly and nicely.

Mr. Eliot is no professor and protests he is no technician, except with words and their meanings. So it is a joy to read him, and it is the more incredible that any should misread him. Here is a specimen paragraph:

> It ought not to be necessary for me to insist that the final aims of the churchman, and the aims of the secular reformer, are very different. So far as the aims of the latter are for true social justice, they ought to be comprehended in those of the former. But one reason why the lot of the secular reformer or revolutionist seems to me to be the easier is this: that for the most part he conceives of the evils of the world as something external to himself. They are thought of either as completely impersonal, so that there is nothing to alter but machinery; or if there is evil *incarnate,* it is always incarnate in the *other people*—a class, a race, the politicians, the bankers, the armament makers, and so forth—never in oneself. There are individual exceptions: but so far as a man sees the need for converting *himself* as well as the world, he is approximating to the religious point of view. But for most people, to be able to simplify issues so as to see only the definite external enemy, is extremely exhilarating, and brings about the bright eye and the springy step that go so well with the political uniform. This is an exhilaration that the Christian must deny himself. It comes from an artificial stimulant bound to have bad after-effects. It causes pride, either individual or collective, and pride brings its own doom. For only in humility, charity and purity—and most of all perhaps humility—can we be prepared to receive the grace of God without which human operations are vain.

"The Idea of a Christian Society" is a strange book in another way: in that it has a strange and yet effective form. Its heart and body consists of 64 pages divided into four chapters and based upon three lectures given in March, 1939, at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. To this has been added a preface, a postscript (September 6, 1939), notes on various ideas that seemed to need amplification, another postscript by way of criticism by a "distinguished theologian," and an appendix consisting of a radio address given by the author in February, 1937. Such a description of a book that in all has only a round hundred pages must give the idea that the whole thing is disorganized; but it isn't. The rather eccentric presentation succeeds in giving an idea of organic growth rather than of scattered carelessness.

What Eliot is trying to do is to discuss a subject "preliminary to the problem of Church and State," not that problem in and for its own sake. He wants first to answer the two questions, "What Church?" and "What State?"—to answer them only tentatively and in a way to promote later and better answers, for he conceives that we are in no position to be more than tentative on either question in the present state of social change. "I am not at this moment concerned with the means for bringing a Christian Society into existence; I am not even primarily concerned with making it desirable; but I am very much concerned with making clear its difference from the kind of society in which we are living."

He then places himself in a middle position in his analysis of our society. "It is my contention that we have today a culture which is mainly negative, but which, so far as it is positive, is still Christian. . . . The defenders of the present order fail to perceive either how far it is vestigial of a positive Christianity, or how far it has already advanced towards something else." He then proceeds to an analysis of "liberalism" and "democracy," dismissing the latter as a word because it means too much. "When a word has become so universally sanctified as 'democracy' now is, I begin to wonder whether it means anything, in meaning too many things: it has arrived perhaps at the position of a Merovingian Emperor, and wherever it is invoked, one begins to look for the Mayor of the Palace. . . . If anybody ever attacked democracy, I might discover what the word meant. Certainly there is a sense in which Britain and America are more democratic than Germany; but on the other hand, defenders of the totalitarian system can make out a plausible case for maintaining that what we have is not democracy, but financial oligarchy."

Eliot's analysis of the uses and abuses of "liberalism" seems to me brilliant. He points out that "It is a necessary negative element: when I have said the worst of it, the worst comes only to this, that a negative element made to serve the purpose of a positive is objectionable." In other words liberalism is nothing men can live by, even in its pleasanter non-theological or non-economic aspects. What is needed, then, regardless of forms of government, is a positive intellectual thing by which men can live, and the choice which confronts the world is between "an apathetic decline, without faith, and therefore without faith in ourselves"; "totalitarian democracy . . . regimentation and conformity, without respect for the needs of the individual soul"; paganism; some viable Christian society.

It is to the preliminary implications of the last possibility that he devotes the rest of his argument, too long to detail here. On many points Catholics will disagree, for Mr. Eliot is an Anglican and because he is dealing with *dubia* indeed. But what he says is compact, and is said in a way to promote a whole library of further enquiries into the matter.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The Reconquest of Mexico. Nathaniel and Sylvia Weyl. Oxford. $3.00.

BOOKS about Mexico have been jumping off the presses of American publishers in recent months with interesting irregularity. Most of them have a shrill little piece to speak before they bounce into oblivion. This study will hold the stage of attention, possibly hear a frequent *Repítalo,* for it speaks with zeal, appeals persuasively through its lithe analysis of realities and facts. Fortified by serious study and serious travel the authors have written a gallant book of information and propaganda, their interpretation "of the Mexican social revolution in its present phase." With shrewd independence, the proper attitude of scholarly talent, they have looked at all the agitated eras in Mexican history. To see what? That history as a preparation for the coming and the unique accomplishments of their hero, José Lázaro Cárdenas. In this sense the book is a life of the present President of the Republic, who has undertaken the reconquest of Mexico "for the people."

No haphazard labor has gone into the plan or structure of this composite biography of a man and his country's history. Mr. and Mrs. Weyl have plundered, politely of course, official documents, studies, texts, histories and pamphlets for the booty they arrange with cleverness and explain with fascination. While more explicit references in many sections to sources would add the tabs of art and finality to research, no one will deny the authors the quality they glorify as Cárdenas's staunchest power, integrity. Nathaniel and Sylvia Weyl write as sophisticated socialists, and in this they are consistent. From their point of view they explain the progress of Cárdenas's program of economic reconstruction for agriculture, education, health, industry, labor and religion. Mistakes and failures are analyzed without hesitation. Color and controversy heighten the eleventh chapter, "Expropriation of the Oil Industry." The interpretation they prefer of Mexico's religious problems seems honest in intention, in spite of harshness of phrasing. No doubt, young Mr. and Mrs. Weyl will be the first to admit they have something to learn about the Catholic Church, even in Mexico. Read their book for its information; mistrust some of its conclusions.

DANIEL S. RANKIN.

Revolution in Land. Charles Abrams. Harper. $3.00.

THE AUTHOR, Charles Abrams, is a lecturer at the New School for Social Research and a consultant of the United States Housing Authority. In the course of his book's sixteen chapters he calmly and accurately presents a picture of present-day America, which makes it evident that this country is about as advanced economically and socially as present-day Russia. The sickening drift of the American farmer into tenancy was never told more clearly; the financially unhealthy condition of every large city in the nation is revealed and the facts are not debatable; the abuse of the real estate mortgage and its blighting effect upon American middle class families is set forth; the absurdity and unfairness of the land tax are dealt with so thoroughly that it is hard to see why anyone should consider buying property after reading the chapter; and the reasons why it is far better for the low income groups to rent than to attempt to build are given, honestly and completely. The book shows that the small individual farms cannot hope to survive without outright grants by the government; that the increase of mortgage indebtedness on real estate from six billion dollars in 1890 to forty-three billion dollars in 1930 has placed a burden on land which cannot be discharged; that AAA was at best a stopgap and in no sense constructive; that FHA, in undertaking to assume mortgages up to 90 percent of the value of the home, is doing something which cannot be justified in view of past, present, or what are apt to be future conditions; and that in time the federal government will own hundreds of thousands of urban homes and perhaps even more farms.

The first fifteen chapters show the futility of what has been done to date to keep this country sound; the final chapter, "Towards Solution," deals with some of the constructive reforms which might be instituted to save the nation. However, any action upon the part of state legislatures or Congress, based upon the recommendations of a Charles Abrams, would of course be unthinkable. Unfortunately, the democratic processes do not call to office men of ability. That is why democracy will perhaps in time be considered as merely one more form of government which did not work.

PAUL KINIERY.

Law and Politics. Felix Frankfurter. Harcourt. $3.00.

THE THOUGHTFUL American must go far before he finds more appropriate and pertinent reading than the editorials, reviews and articles that together make up "Law and Politics." The selected writings of Mr. Justice Frankfurter in this book are more than mere models of clear, lucid and auriloquent prose. They give an insight into the mind of a Supreme Court justice, are a valuable contribution to America's political literature and perhaps adumbrate the trend of the Supreme Court. His discussion of such diverse topics as the Supreme Court, law and science, the liberties of a free people, labor and the courts, government and the courts, business and the courts, and such men as Holmes, Brandeis and Cardozo reveals that Justice Frankfurter has a coherent and rational social philosophy.

Justice Frankfurther stands within the sociological, jurisprudential tradition whose chief lights have been Holmes, Brandeis and Cardozo. Like Holmes he believes that the Constitution is a broad and organic charter with a progressing content; that it does not enthrone any specific economic theory or policy; that the interests of creditors and debtors, of capital and labor and of finance and land clash and that law is the instrumentality whereby the social tensions caused by these poles of mutual opposition are maintained in equilibrium and resolved; that judges ought not substitute their own views for those of the legislature and thereby defeat social and labor statutes; and that judges ought to be guided by a consideration of what is expedient for the whole community. With Brandeis he holds that judicial adjudication should involve a consideration not only of legal precedent but economic and social fact when a decision is likely to affect the common good. Justice Cardozo was indeed one of the most lovable figures in American jurisprudence; his sensitiveness to the high claims of conscience, his wide scholarship and warm charity and his unceasing quest for beauty and truth have contributed greatly to producing a law more conformable to justice.

The criticism that may be leveled against this school is that pragmatism raised to the position of a metaphysic is an unrealist *weltanschauung* and that its consequences are disastrous, as was seen when Justice Holmes sustained the constitutionality of a Virginia statute permitting the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sterilization of innocent imbeciles, whose only crime was they were unfortunate enough to be born mentally defective. Here we see pragmatism justifying the state's violation of a person's sacred, God-given right to procreate, in the name of social expediency. Expedience is no guide if it is not subordinate to ethics, and ethics is blind if it is not derived from a sound metaphysic.

JOSEPH CALDERON.

America Faces South. T. R. Ybarra. Dodd. $3.00.

AN EXPERIENCED reporter separates one Latin American country from another for the enlightenment of North American readers. Sounds too much like a conscientious gambler "making a book" on the South American imperialist sweepstake, but gives a lot of information and does distinguish, for example (the most important), a Brazilian from an Argentinian. The chapter "Kings and Pawns" apologizes much more for Spanish America than is required, and, while noting real failures of the Spanish American régimes, overlooks their triumphs. Mr. Ybarra should contrast the colonial policy, and particularly the Indian policy, of the Iberian empires to those which operated in North America. Latin America faced the problem of developing an European-American culture; in the United States, colonizers simply eliminated the native American element. P. B.

HISTORY

Statesmen of the Lost Cause. Burton J. Hendrick. Little, Brown. $3.75.

THE CONFEDERACY failed for two reasons. It produced five great generals but not one outstanding statesman. It was also founded on a principle—state rights—that made impossible the orderly conduct of public affairs. If this be treason to the present tendency to romanticize the "lost cause," Mr. Hendrick makes the best of it. The present volume is a pitiless, realistic study of the mediocre statesmanship and diplomacy of the South in terms of sharply etched biographies of those key characters who, in the political, social and economic fields, fought neither wisely nor well.

Perhaps the greatest single delusion of Confederate statesmanship was the conviction that, by withholding cotton from Europe, England and France would be forced to recognize the South as an independent nation. Benjamin wisely proposed that the government purchase at least 100,000 bales of cotton, ship it to England, buy at least 150,000 stands of arms and use the residue as a basis for credit. The Confederacy, however, instead of making the best use of this resource, deliberately did all in its power to make it useless. The Davis embargo on cotton, together with Lincoln's blockade, achieved the destruction of the South as an economic and financial power.

The spectacle of nine million people springing to arms in defense of an independent existence is a myth. There were more than 100,000 desertions from the Confederate army. Northern sentiment was strong in southwestern Virginia, eastern Tennessee, western North and South Carolina and northern Georgia and Alabama. Practically all the states fought conscription even more fiercely than they fought the Yankees. Two governors in particular, Brown of Georgia and Vance of North Carolina, by a literal application of the state rights doctrine to the prosecution of the war, did perhaps as much as Grant and Sherman to destroy the Confederacy. The Southern cause fell in ruins, as Mr. Hendrick proves conclusively, not because Jefferson Davis was too much of a despot, but rather because he was not despot enough.

JOHN J. O'CONNOR.

Revisions of the Treaty of Versailles. Waldo E. Stephens. Columbia. $3.00.

THIS brief account of the first attempt of modern states to achieve revisions of a peace treaty within a definite field of international organization throws considerable light upon the elements of strength and weakness—mostly weakness—in this initial experiment in behalf of peaceful change. The current war might have been averted if the Allied Powers had permitted necessary revisions of the Versailles treaty in an equitable, pacific manner. J. J. O'C.

MISCELLANEOUS

Across the Dark River. Peter Mendelssohn. Doubleday. $2.50.

THE PRESSING social problem brought upon the world by the brutal Nazi persecution of the Jews has given rise to many books, but few so eloquent, so telling as Peter Mendelssohn's "Across the Dark River." His story is that almost incredible factual one of what happened to a group of Austrian refugees whose world was suddenly reduced to a bleak breakwater on the Danube: a stark, simple, utterly terrible story of man's inhumanity to man, written in a distinguished prose style by a young man who is himself an exile from his country because of his Jewish blood. Mendelssohn writes sensitively and so vividly that his scenes of terrorism by the degenerate Nazis are sometimes close to nauseating. Few books which are important social documents are at the same time so beautifully written, so well told and so convincingly peopled. "All that matters is the man, all that counts is dignity!" Such is Mendelssohn's creed. "Across the Dark River" is a book that lingers in memory, that leaves the reader with a great, helpless sadness, quietly powerful, a damning indictment of human cruelty as it exists in the Germany of today. AUGUST DERLETH.

The Devil to Pay. Dorothy Sayers. Harcourt. $1.50.

"BEING the famous History of John Faustus the Conjurer of Wittenberg in Germany; how he sold his immortal soul to the Enemy of Mankind, and was served twenty-four years by Mephistopheles, and obtained Helen of Troy to his paramour, with many other marvels; and how God dealt with him at last." Miss Sayers has attempted a new interpretation of the haunting Faust legend in terms comprehensible to this generation. She has not wholly succeeded, and "The Devil to Pay" is poorer poetic drama than her "Zeal of Thy House," which was less ambitious. Even one who took a first at Oxford in medieval studies, became the best woman advertising copywriter in London and has been widely hailed as the finest mystery story teller of our time should have thought twice before risking comparisons with Marlowe and Goethe.

To be sure, Miss Sayers confesses that "to endeavor to do again what greater poets have already done magnificently would be folly as well as presumption"; but it is impossible to use the Faust story without inviting invidious comparisons. Marlowe and Goethe have made it their own for all time, and it has to be thoroughly disguised, as in Stephen Benet's "Devil and Daniel Webster," to be re-used successfully. Miss Sayers sees in Faust not a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

passionate pursuer of knowledge for its own sake, but "the type of impulsive reformer, over-sensitive to suffering, impatient of the facts, eager to set the world right by a sudden overthrow, in his own strength and regardless of the ineluctable nature of things." When he cannot do it, he falls into defeatism, and seeks escape nostalgically in the rejection of adult responsibility and the denial of all value to growth and time. Miss Sayers attempts to discuss the problem of evil, which is certainly the preeminent problem of our day, but it is hardly one to be resolved in an hour and forty minutes, even before so theologically minded an audience as gathers for the annual festival at Canterbury Cathedral. There are moments of beauty and poetry in her play, but it lacks vitality in the reading and seems too episodic to play well. Catholic readers, however, should find it worthy of their attention, for Miss Sayer's second-best is better than many an author's best. No one can write a "Zeal of Thy House" annually.

MASON WADE.

You'd Better Come Quietly. Leonard Feeney, S.J. Sheed and Ward. $2.00.

IF YOU LIKED "Fish on Friday," you will be delighted with this second collection of Father Feeney's essays and sketches. In addition to the expert gayety and therapeutic satire which characterize the first volume, there are several pieces which achieve the almost impossible fusion of poetic insight and profound philosophic power. The title article and the essay "Explaining the Trinity to Thomas Butler" are brilliant and original discussions of theology which indicate a meditative scholarship which Father Feeney is at pains to hide. The lighter and shorter articles also gleam with suggestions. There are a few new characters to add to the Feeney gallery, dad and mother of "A Sympathetic Summary" and the impossible Edgar of "The Problem Mind." "You'd Better Come Quietly" is not just fun; if you laugh or if you are inspired, you will have earned your reward by thinking. This is the best kind of spiritual reading.

FRANCIS X. CONNOLLY.

Captain Abby and Captain John. Robert P. Tristram Coffin. Macmillian. $2.50.

IT'S TRUE what they are saying about this unusual volume. The Pennells were an upstanding, devoted couple who had a most adventuresome career in one of the most picturesque eras of our history. They were real sailors and real New Englanders. And Robert P. Tristram Coffin writes well. But in this case he seems to have clung too closely to log book and diary; he has written too little of his own on the life of the clipper days. This book will prove fascinating to those who make a hobby of that subject, but to an unenlightened New Yorker it seems to deal too much with the size of the washes Abby hung out, too little with how she looked and felt. E. S.

Rubens: Paintings and Drawings. Phaidon Editions. (Oxford.) $2.50.

THE PHAIDON PRESS adds the dextrous, sensuous, worldly master of northern baroque to its moderately-priced but sumptuously-illustrated series of art books. R. A. M. Stevenson's forty-page introduction correlates Rubens's successful career as a courtier and ambassador with his fantastically fertile output as an original artist and master of a booming "painting factory."

P. B.

B. ALTMAN & CO.

an important January

saving on black or grey

Persian lamb coats

288.00

regularly 345.00

popular favorites from our regular stock, reduced to this special sale price. A wide variety of styles, and a complete assortment of sizes. Lovely coats made of selected skins, these are buys. Deferred payment plans arranged.

Altman furs . . . third floor

Fifth Avenue at 34th Street *Telephone MU. 9-7000*

Also at Our East Orange and White Plains Shops

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CALDWELL COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

A Select Boarding and Day College

conducted by

The Sisters of St. Dominic
Caldwell, New Jersey

Accredited — Four Year Arts Courses—A.B. and B.S. Degrees—
Small Classes—Select Faculty
Cultural Environment

25 Minutes from New York

New York and Jersey City buses pass the college.

SPRING TERM STARTS FEB. 1
Registration Daily Until 8 P. M.

For Information or Catalog, Address the Dean
CALDWELL COLLEGE, Mt. St. Dominic
Caldwell, N. J.

COLLEGE OF MOUNT ST. VINCENT

Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson, New York, N. Y.

Conducted by the Sisters of Charity

Regional and state accreditment Offers A.B. and B.S. Degrees
Teacher and Secretarial Training

Ninety-six acres bordering Hudson River. Twelve miles from Grand Central Station, New York City.

For Particulars Address Registrar

ROSARY COLLEGE

River Forest, Suburb of Chicago

A Catholic College for Women

Conducted by the Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa, Wis.
Accredited by the Association of American Universities.
Offers Courses in Modern Gaelic.
Junior Year may be spent abroad in Fribourg, Switzerland

IF the school facilities you are seeking are not specifically offered among these advertisements, address your inquiry to the Educational Information Department of THE COMMONWEAL.

The Inner Forum

IN THE January *Homiletic and Pastoral Review,* Father Schmiedeler, O.S.B., Director of the Rural Life Bureau of the NCWC, gives a survey of the work of the motor missions in 1939. Scarcely five years old, motor missions were active last summer in twenty dioceses or archdioceses.

About a week ahead of time posters are placed in the town in which the meetings are to be held, as well as in the surrounding countryside. A day or so before the opening of the mission, handbills are distributed by local children. The coming of the church-on-wheels itself attracts not a little attention. Sometimes patriotic airs, old rural favorites and religious hymns are played during the day or immediately preceding the religious program in the evening. Religious moving pictures, catechetical films and transcribed Lives of the Saints are used effectively as parts of the religious programs. Invariably literature is distributed during or after the programs.

Audiences are said to average between 100 and 300, but run from one or two dozen to one or two thousand. A further unseen audience is reached by the public address systems. "A careful check of the attendance at meetings held by one missioner on 48 evenings in the Diocese of Oklahoma City-Tulsa showed a total attendance of 10,360, of which 3,350 were Catholics and 7,010 non-Catholics."

Most of the motor mission activity so far is being carried on among the whites of the countryside. However, in several dioceses the Negroes are being reached too. Five motor-chapels are being used among the Indians. . . . At Fayetteville and Tullahoma, in the Nashville Diocese, the Negroes are reported to have turned out *en masse.* The average attendance at the former place was 500 and on the last night well over 700, practically the whole colored population. . . .

Four different results are consistently mentioned in reports: the allaying of prejudice; the return to the Church of fallen-away Catholics; the provision of increased opportunity for the reception of the Sacraments on the part of neglected Catholics in the countryside; the conversion of non-Catholics. . . . In Brighton, Colorado . . . thirteen converts. . . . . In Tonkawa, Oklahoma . . . twenty-six converts. . . . At Alto, Tennessee, the Paulists built their first permanent church for their motor mission converts in 1938.

CONTRIBUTORS

H. F. C. BELL is professor of history at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.
William COLLINS is New York Representative, AFL.
William O'MEARA teaches philosophy in the graduate school of Fordham University.
Glenn Ward DRESBACH is a poet from Illinois who contributes widely to American magazines.
Rev. Daniel S. RANKIN teaches history at St. Mary's Manor, South Langhorne, Pa.
Paul KINIERY is assistant dean of the graduate school, Loyola University, Chicago.
Joseph CALDERON is a New York labor lawyer.
John J. O'CONNOR teaches history at St. John's University, Brooklyn.
August DERLETH is a Wisconsin poet and novelist.
Mason WADE is a Vermont critic and author of a forthcoming biography of Margaret Fuller.
Francis X. CONNOLLY teaches in the graduate school of Fordham University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED